



Cruising The Bahamas - Single Handed

March 1989 - No. 39

By Jim Stevenson

Jim Stevenson, age 69, (F-27 sail number 12) returned July 15th, 1988 from a 4 month trip to Florida and the Bahamas. His boat "Tristar" was towed to Florida from Santa Barbara, demonstrating the great cruising range and versatility of the trailerable F-27. He sailed some 820 nautical miles in 2 1/2 months from Fort Lauderdale out and back through most of the Bahama chain of islands. A great variety of sailing conditions were experienced from crossing the Gulfstream with its northward flowing current, more than 40 miles across giving 37 degrees drift, to sailing hundreds of miles across the Great Bahama Banks in water no deeper than eight feet. The trip was a marvelous adventure, with Berni, Jim's wife, joining him several times by flying to nearby airstrips. Jim writes:

The cruising waters of the Bahamas are some of the most beautiful in the world, filled with the most interesting island scenery, sea and birdlife. Islands visited were Bimini, Berry, Nassau on New Providence and the 165 mile Exuma chain where the water was most beautiful and filled with porpoises, dolphin, giant rays, tropical fish and turtles. Also Long Island with a great



What cruising is all about - TRISTAR and the beach at Fernandez Bay, Cat Island

regatta, Conception, Cat, Little San Salvador and Eleuthera.

The water temperatures were always around 87 degrees, perfect for snorkling. Sailing conditions were excellent except for occasional thunderstorms. At anchor with tidal currents, often three knots or more, and with thunderstorm passages, two anchors and chain were always the rule.

No real problems surfaced with the boat which is easily single-handed. Meeting the Bahamian People and the crews of hundreds of cruising sailboats from all over the world proved most interesting and enjoyable. Customs and immigration procedures were no problem. Small settlements, towns and somewhat primitive marinas provided a convenient source of stores; foodstuffs, supplies and boating needs. Anchorages were the most beautiful imaginable and it was easy to either anchor alone or in the company of many other yachts, both power and sail. VHF communications were excellent, but, due to very few telephones, my HF-SSB radio proved very valuable.

My experiences have enabled me to pass on the following observations regarding the cruising capabilities and use of equipment aboard an F-27.

ANCHORS : A Bruce 11 pound fits nicely over the bow chock where it can hang

without being in the way. It's a perfect all around anchor, secured this way, and by removing the cross bolt on the chock, it is ready for instant use. Pull the attached chain (25 or 30') back into the anchor well with the other end attached to 150 or more feet of rode. Safety wire the shackles. A bungee cord at each end is hooked to the chain to hold it back and taut so it lies out of the way. I found the best "back-up" anchor to be the 14 pound Deepset hi-tensile Danforth - it digs well into the bottom - I set it from a float bow where I have a cleat 5' ahead of the forward beam. It can be used from the stern to prevent swinging. I carry it to where I use it, in a mesh bag with its rode and chain.

DAGGERBOARD : I found the boat handles well as long as the daggerboard is down about 12 inches or more.

RUDDER : Should not be controlled by the autopilot close in, or in high wind maneuvering - the throw of the tiller is restricted - manually use the tiller. I anchored many times in 3' of water - release the down line on the rudder and fasten it in the jam cleat only so it will kick up if it goes aground, you can still steer if it does. Raise the daggerboard just as you head into the shoal area so it won't go aground.

SAFETY LINE : A small, strong climbing rope can be fastened to each end of the



Jim, with iguanas, on the beach at Allens Cay.

traveler and run around the cabin outside the inboard stays and over the sheets via the deck fitting just aft of the hatch over the head - a safety harness clipped to it with about a 6' lanyard allows the wearer just the right latitude.

DOCKING : In the eastern U.S. and Bahamas, docks are concrete or wood with pilings and don't float with the tide. To keep from damaging your floats, use a 15' x 6" x 1/2" side board or two about 6' long and place your fenders behind them. The board can be tied to your lifelines to hang properly.

WATER : Extra drinking water can be carried in gallon plastic containers. I stored them in open plastic boxes tied on top of the main cabin ahead of the pop-top. I carried 16 gallons this way, using the ship's water for washing, etc.

HEADSAILS : I use a zippered bag on the forward bow for stowing a headsail while leaving it hanked to the forestay - easy up and down, bungees hold everything down.

ACCESSORIES : A cigarette lighter plug in the cabin can provide power for: 12V portable radio, a cooler, a fan (a must for each sleeping person in the Tropics) and a Braun or Eltron electric shaver - works on all voltages from 12 to 220, perfect for traveling. A spotlight and vacuum cleaner can also be used.

NAVIGATION : My navigating is primarily by Loran with a back up of a D.F. and log and depth finder. Hourly position plots are a must with pelorus sights and celestial sun lines as necessary. I have a Hamilton vertical compass in the cabin as a back up and use it to monitor the boats heading even at anchor at night to watch for shifts of the wind.

CHARTS : For the Bahamas, I had a Bahamas chart kit from the Better Boating Association and a Klines "Yachtsman's Guide to the Bahamas".

DINGHY : I carried an 81/2 foot

inflatable dinghy tied upside down on the forward port wing. The 2 h.p. outboard for it on a stern rail mount. A bridle for towing is a must, but the dinghy offers so much drag, it should only be towed short distances. Entering and leaving the F-27 by dinghy proved best on the starboard aft side of the main hull, but be careful, the pointed stern



The well equipped cruiser - TRISTAR at Nausau Harbor

of the nearby float could punch a hole easily!

VENTILATION : Ventilation below can be improved by the use of a windscoop - made of cloth and plastic and available from marine hardware stores. Take it down when it rains, close up and use the fan below, then with the anchor well hatch open a ways, the round ports in the anchor well help lots and mosquito net can be taped over them if necessary. It rained over 60" on my trip. Frontal passages and thunderstorms occurred with regularity. Winds of 45-65 knots were experienced both en route and while anchored. Two good anchors were always needed - if you drag onto the nearby coral the boat can be severely damaged. If there is any doubt about the setting of the anchors, diving down with fins and snorkel allow you to set them properly or untangle them if there has been a wind shift since they were set. Lying in the bunk at night during a frontal passage with 60 knots of wind, exposed to the wind with waves breaking over the top of the cabin, makes you happy to set your anchors properly. At the time I went to bed the wind was from a different direction before the front came through. En route I, being alone, furlled the sails and hand steered (autopilot can't handle a 45 knot plus storm condition) and used the outboard with its electric starter.

SWIMMING : For swimming, I draped a boarding ladder over the lifelines between the beams to go to and from the water. Works great and is plenty strong.

SAIL CONTROLS : I found I could obtain the proper sail shape both on the main and jib by using a Barber hauler to tension and adjust the sails - the boom vang I'd only use during frequent tacks which

wasn't very often. Elastic bungees were used by the dozen to hold everything topside down and in place.

FOOD : Eating for several months required some thought. I took along enough for 3 months. The use of canned fish, chicken and turkey eaten with liberal servings of catsup. Granola bars, trail mix, canned and dried fruit, along with local fish, bread and conch were the rule. I used a Swiss cooker like advertised on TV to cook everything and it worked great. Potatoes and fish were delicious. Local bread or boxed crackers with peanut butter and jelly worked out well. Liquid meal drinks like SEGO and Nutrament gave me balanced meals too, along with the milk they are made with. This saved drinking so much water too. Yurika meals like the "round the world" Voyager airplane crew used proved excellent.

CLOTHES : I installed a towel rack about 2' long inverted on the starboard, overhead in the cabin trunk and it works great as a hanging space and doesn't interfere with the trunk cabin use, as the clothes hang back in the recess there.

TOWING : In towing the boat I installed extensions on my van exhaust pipes directing the exhaust out, away from the boat and with mud flaps behind all its wheel, the boat stays nice and clean even with the 7200 miles I towed it.

MAST LOWERING : At home I have to lower the mast 45 degrees every day to go under a bridge and use two spectra non-stretching lines from the jib halyard via snatch blocks forward, to the winches to control the mast while underway.

SAFETY : While single-handing offshore, I always wear shoes or boots leaving the cockpit, otherwise I could stumble and be hurt. No good at my age. Leaving and when out of the cockpit I always hold onto something solid with one hand or the other. As the old saying goes, "one hand for the boat and one hand for yourself".

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What's What?

What are **Trailertris**, **Tramps** and **Eagles**? Trailertris are designs by Ian Farrier for amateur builders, and include the **Trailertri 18, 680** (22'), **720** (24') and the **Command 10** (33'). For an information package send \$3 to Ian Farrier, P.O. Box 7362, Chula Vista, CA 92012.

The **Tramp** was the first production Trailertri, a 19' day sailer/overnight camper, developed in Australia. The **Eagle** is the name of the U.S. built Tramp.

The **F-27** has developed from these designs, and represents the 'state of the art' in trailable multihulls. All use the same patented Farrier folding system.

THE ONLY BOAT

by Christy and Greg Trigeiro

San Diego, port of 10,000 boats and well-mannered breezes. Hah! You would never have known it on the afternoon of December 8, 1988. One of our yearly Santa Ana wind storms had blown in with enough air turbulence to have the small craft warnings put up. "SEA SKATE weather!" we cried when we heard the winds were going to peak that day. So, hurriedly canceling our appointments, we dashed down to the harbor where the Skate was on her trailer. Swinging her into the water it seemed as if the winds were not as strong as they had been inland where we lived. Christy wished she'd brought the baby for a pleasant afternoon sail.

We put our 'foulies' on anyway, and once in the water decided to head out to the ocean rather than the harbor to search for stronger winds. We found them! The wind was coming from the east, at around 25 knots, with gusts up to 30. Plenty of white caps, but as we were going with the wind, it was relatively smooth sailing. On a broad reach heading for Tijuana, with full main and jib, we started a speed run faster than any we had done before. We broke Sea Skate's old record and set a new one of 18 knots! Our average on that heading must have been around 15 knots. Just the sort of wind an F-27 loves. Navy helicopters flew close by (and one even doubled back for a second look,) evidently amazed at what they saw.

Sighting what appeared to be a smoke flare in the west near the Coronado Islands, we headed that way. This dropped our speed to about six knots as we were heading close to downwind. At this point we had lunch and an opportunity to look around. We were the only boat as far as we could see in any direction! The only boat! We felt

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a certain pride in our craft's seaworthiness and in our own confidence to take it out on a day others chose to avoid.

We never did see what might have set off the smoke, so we headed back toward the harbor. This put us heading more toward the wind and against the waves. Boy, were we glad we had our foul-weather gear



SEA SKATE in the 1988 Marina Del Rey - San Diego Race

and Christy was glad she hadn't brought the baby! What a ride! Even as we crashed through the waves we were averaging 10-11 knots. The boat pitched and bucked but we managed to hang onto whatever was handy. As we drew nearer to Point Loma we finally sighted another boat - a 45 ft. ketch whose crew were desperately trying to take down their mainsail. A coast guard helicopter circled them for about 15 minutes until they finally got the main down and then put it up again, reefed about half, with full mizzen sail but no jib.

We headed toward the southwest again but found the wind was really picking up. We thought it might have been 30 knots, gusting up to 40. We didn't dare go on the broad reach again as the boat would have been overpowered. As it was we should have reefed the main and/or taken down the jib, but Christy was not experienced with reefing or sailing in strong winds and so we decided that discretion was the better part of valor and finally headed back into the harbor. Once into the channel, the winds were a lot lighter and it got warmer!

We pulled up to the dock and immediately ran aground. Evidently the recent dredging had only created a depth of 5-6

For Information on the F-27

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JAPAN - GLENSHEE JAPAN LTD.,
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feet and with an extremely low tide we hit sand. No problem with a daggerboard, but we do wonder what some of the keelboats will do if they try and leave at low tide. We hosed the boat off and left the jib unfolded in the cabin to dry out. Total time sailing was about three and a half hours. Over clam chowder and hot chocolate we later decided it was the best sail we'd ever had. Discussing what we learned from the day, we decided that we need to practice reefing maneuvers and think about installing some safety devices that Ian and John evidently forgot- seat belts!!!!!!!

F-27 NEWS

AT CORSAIR: Production is now a steady one per week, occasionally one every 4 days, with boat No. 83 just started. Production is expected to reach two per week sometime this year. Look for a good article coming up in the May issue of SAIL.

DOUBLE BERTH: Most owners have found the aft cabin double berth to be surprisingly comfortable, but it can be cramped for the bigger sailors. A good solution to this has been found by Jerry Pope, of New Mexico. Jerry bought Corsair's demonstrator boat TRANSFORMER some time ago, and does a lot of cruising with his wife Patsy. Jerry made up a 1/2" ply panel, 6' 6" long, that just overlaps the port and starboard settees, with a slot in the front to fit on the daggerboard case. A piece of foam between the two berths then converts them into a huge double. The ply stores very simply by sliding it under the cockpit (under the aft berth cushion). At CORSAIR, we were skeptical at first, but now having seen how well it works will be offering it as a standard option. Jerry recently sold TRANSFORMER but immediately ordered a new F-27 in which he and Patsy are going to embark on a nationwide cruise/tour.

PERFORMANCE TIP: For the absolute best windward performance it is essential that the boat, and hence the rig, be as stiff as possible. During construction we put a double layer of Kevlar along the center

hull keel and use carbon fiber in the beams. This creates an incredibly stiff structure and the F-27 can thus outperform 40 foot monos to weather. However, it can do even better.

Also during construction, we leave a large hole, called the aft hatch, between the aft beams. Now this useful device allows a small amount of flex between the aft beams, which does not help rig tension at all. Much head scratching has taken place over this, and how to prevent it. The hatch is already ringed by uni-directional 'S' glass, just for this reason, but some flex still remains. We could glass the hatch shut (they do weld doors shut on racing cars for the same reason) but then access to the aft cabin could be a little difficult. Not a good idea.

We are still pondering this, but in the meantime, keen racers would benefit by simply wedging a wood or aluminum compression strut between the top flanges on the aft beams (not the flat beam ends), or between the aft hatch sides. Try to have as much bearing area as possible each end, and wedge it in hard. This will eliminate the flex, resulting in a tighter rig, and even better windward performance, especially in the higher wind ranges.

First F-27 Now In Australia



The Australian company OSTAC has been appointed the F-27 distributor for Australia, and their first boat has just arrived. A partner in OSTAC (Offshore Sailing Trimarans and Catamarans) is Paul Koch, one of the original Trailertri 680 builders. OSTAC has also now taken over the TRAMP molds and will have a new version of the TRAMP available later this year. Photo shows the first Aussie F-27 being loaded into its container by some of Corsair's associates.

LETTERS

Dear Ian,

I thought it only fitting to write and let you know my admiration for your F-27 design. It's been one year since we took delivery of Hull #33 and this boat still amazes me. Saturday we raced in the Del Rey Yacht Club's Berger Series #2, San Pedro Race. Our O.R.C.A. start consisted of five F-27s, two 40' tris, a 42' cat and a 36' cat.

After sailing through moderate wind, light air, chop, fog and a spinnaker run to round the weather mark, a strong front

British Double Gold Medalist Now F-27 Distributor In Great Britain

Rodney Pattison, the double Olympic gold medalist, 1983 America's Cup Challenger co-skipper, and 1985 World 1 ton Champion, along with his sailing partner Rodney Arnold, have been appointed distributors for Great Britain of the F-27.

The 'Rodneys' have just taken delivery of the first boat, which will be campaigned in the coming season and entered in the 'Two Man Round Britain Race' later this year.

came through with 25+ knots. to clear the air. Upon rounding the mid-channel marker, we settled in for the tight reach home. For over 2 hours we sustained 15+ knots. with a full genoa and main, passing all the 40'+ big boys in Fleet A! This was without a doubt the best ride I have had in 20 years of sailboat racing. Having started an hour earlier, we passed 40 footers with their eight crew members sitting on the rail cheering us as we flew by them like they were standing still. It was truly an awesome feeling!

During this reach, FLYING FISH John Simpkins F-27, was right behind us within 5-10 boat lengths. John was sailing with a full main and jib., and it looked like he could sail higher and a little faster as the broadside waves rolled under (and over) us. TRI-TO-FLY on the other hand, accelerated off the waves and drove a little deeper and faster in between them.

The wind completely died about half a mile from the finish and we ghosted around until a slight 3 kts. filled in. FLYING FISH having stayed high got the gun for the O.R.C.A. class and TRI-TO-FLY came across one and a half minutes later for another 1st in the series.

Ian, thanks again for a truly fine boat, and thanks to John Walton and the entire crew at Corsair for the great execution of such a fine design. The only thing

that broke during the race was my anxiety level—I now believe the boat can take it.

Finally, I think it's a testimony to the design and strength of the F-27 that monohull crew members would openly cheer on a 27' trimaran speeding past them.

*Sincerely,
Bill Schultz
TRI-TO-FLY, Los Angeles, California*

Dear Ian,

This letter is long overdue. I should have written earlier to tell you how pleased we are with our F-27.

We were able to sail our F-27 for about a month before it was pulled for winter storage. We found the boat was everything you advertised it to be and more! I honestly was a little skeptical of some of the claims in your literature about how carefree raising and lowering the mast would be, and how easy it was to fold the boat. This boat is the sixth we have owned and I have learned not to put too much faith in all the manufacturer's claims. I was wrong. The F-27 does live up to the claims. The system that you have designed for raising and lowering the mast is so well engineered that it works flawlessly. It truly is a stressless, one man job requiring no brute strength. Folding the boat is also a very easy task. I was thinking at the boat show "it's easy here with no wind and no chop, but what is it like in the real world?" I now know that it is just as easy in 20 knot winds with a two to three foot chop. I can best sum up how easy these two processes are by saying that my wife at 5'5" and 130 lbs. can handle these jobs by herself if need be.

All the systems on the boat have been so well thought out and designed that it is a joy to sail. The boat always attracts attention wherever we go and everyone always comments on the quality of the design, hardware and finish on the F-27. We think that this boat is ideal for the Chesapeake Bay. With its centerboard and shallow draft it is the perfect boat for slipping into all the beautiful, shallow gunkholes that the bay abounds in and is famous for. Because of its low wetted surface area and light weight it is the ideal boat for ghosting along on the frequent light airs and yet, it has the stability for exhilarating performance when the winds do blow.

Judy and I are really looking forward to summer when school is over to take our first long cruise. We think that our F-27, SILENT RUNNING, is the ideal pocket cruiser.

*Sincerely,
Richard C. Sanger,
Wilmington, Delaware*

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If you are further interested in the F-27 or a Trailertri, then the best way to keep up to date with the latest developments is to subscribe to this Newsletter. You don't have to be an owner or builder.

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